

## LITERARY NOTES.

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CANNON FARRAR'S Life of St. Paul will be ready early this month at Cassell, Peter and Galpin's. One circulating library alone in London has subscribed for a thousand copies of it.

L'Art for August 10 contains a powerful full-page sketch of Victor Hugo by P. Rajon, after L. Bouquet's well-known portrait of the poet in the Salon of 1870. It is said of it that the trouble of thought even for the old giant's mind is admirably expressed on his countenance, and that it is "a portrait that all worshippers at Victor Hugo's shrine will like to possess."

A review in *The Athenaeum* of Mr. Didier's "Life of Madame Bonaparte" does in this antithetical fashion: "She died at ninety-four; and her egotism and unctuous temperament were enough to keep a woman alive she might have lived forever. She was a girl of ten, repeating Roerigemund, when in the Fifteenth Vendémiaire, Bonaparte got his chance, and he had to say, 'Madame, you see she would have seen its end on in Zhouland. That is, perhaps, the most notable fact about her."

Max Müller prefaches the first volume of the important work on the Sacred Books of the East, of which he is the editor, with a striking passage from the writings of Bishop Beveridge, the distinguished Oriental scholar of the seventeenth century. "Indeed," says the bishop, "there was not any religion so barbarous and diabolical but it was preferred before all other religions whatsoever than that did profess it; otherwise they would not have professed it. And why, say they, may not you be mistaken as well as we? Especially when there is, at least, six to one against your Christian religion; all of whom think that they serve God aright, and expect happiness thereby as well as you."

The volume of speeches by John Bright, which Thos Rogers has edited and Macmillan & Co. have published, is the third volume of the kind that has been issued. The others appeared eleven years ago. High tributes are paid to Mr. Bright's eloquence in recent numbers of two English periodicals. *The Saturday Review* says it was generally admitted when the first two volumes appeared that "no living orator was equally entitled to the distinction of a permanent record of his eloquence." Mr. Gladstone, while more versatile, more accomplished, and reader in debate, "falls far short of his friend and competitor in rhetorical grace and finish of style." *The Athenaeum* says that Mr. Bright's speeches "have a greater literary value, or those of another man of orators. They are finished in a purer and more resembling in this the masterpieces of the orators of Greece and Rome. So good are they as pieces of composition that they may almost be called studies in oratory."

Mr. Sayce, in his work on Babylonian literature, brings out the curious fact that among the mythological poems and epics which succeeded the age of Babylonian hymns is one which recounts the descent of the Goddess Ishtar into Hades in search of her husband Tammuz, the beautiful Sungod slain by the task of Aphrodite and Adonis. Another tells of a Chaldean Prometheus who steals the secrets of the gods and was transformed into a bird of prey. It was around the name of Gilgamesh that mythology in that country clustered most thickly, and laid the foundations of the chief epic of ancient Babylonia.

Mr. Sayce's work on the Phoenician alphabet is accumulating to a mass, it abundantly clear, that the forms of much of the Greek pantheon and mythology, like the forms of Greek art, were primarily derived from Babylonian and Assyrian, through the medium of the Phoenician alphabet. Assyrian researches have proved their views important, not only to the Biblical student, but to the Greek scholar as well.

Considerable attention has been drawn in England to an article in the last *Spectator* on Mr. Peter Bayne's "Lessons from my Masters," those masters being Carlyle, Tennyson and Ruskin, and a report has got into the newspapers that Mr. Ruskin is the author of it. Very little is said of Ruskin in the article, the reason being given that "the present writer is only competent to say on that head that Mr. Bayne's study of Ruskin as an art critic is full of interest," while it is added that "on Mr. Ruskin's general doctrines, Mr. Bayne speaks with reserve—perhaps with too much reserve." Elsewhere in the article it is said that Mr. Bayne speaks of Mr. Ruskin's writings on art "with a reverent deference to which we cannot think them entitled." Be the author who he may, the article is a superb piece of literary work. Its estimate of Carlyle is interesting, even if it be not Ruskin's. "It has been probably his greatest fault," says the writer, "as a delineator, that, as a rule, he has shown a tendency to overpaint the inward phenomena of which he had discovered, or thought he had discovered, the signs." He is too free, not only with the eternities and the immensities, but with the failure of the eternities and the immensities. Carlyle's sober, intellectual judgment is "vastly inferior to" his seeing power. He has been a wise and serene life, lived without being bent into conformity with any standard of right except his own, but conforming to the standard of right as he saw it in himself in a far more accurate estimate, with great resolution." Again, it has been "a just and dignified life, a life of worthy self-education, prepared for business in three months. Terms low.

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H. C.